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**PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2004**

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**Mayors Herenton and Wharton and District Attorney Bill Gibbons  
Announce New Code Enforcement Task Force**

Memphis, TN, October 27, 2004..... Willie W. Herenton, Mayor, City of Memphis, AC Wharton, Shelby County Mayor and Shelby County District Attorney General Bill Gibbons, announced earlier today at a press conference in City Hall the formation of a new Code Enforcement Task Force.

“A major goal of my administration is to develop, focus on and implement short and long-term strategies designed to improve safety, security and living conditions citywide through consistent code enforcement,” Mayor Herenton stated. “Consistent and unbiased enforcement will positively impact the quality of life for Memphis residents.”

The task force will take a comprehensive approach to code enforcement that is designed to improve code compliance. The key to this approach is to improve communication between city and county agencies and the public. One example is the identification of community-based information sources that will help the task force identify problem areas in code compliance and enforcement. Citing code violators and summoning them to court is another method aimed at improving code compliance.

The Mayor announced the formation of a Task Force that will play a key role in forging improved communication between agencies. The Task Force is made up of a wide spectrum of City and County agencies that are involved with various aspects of enforcing compliance with code enforcement.

“Balanced investment is the only sustainable growth strategy for Shelby County,” stated Mayor Wharton. “Instead of abandoning neighborhoods that have problem properties and driving development of new suburbs, we need to focus on reinvesting in our core communities. A comprehensive neighborhood clean-up strategy is vital to that effort”.

The primary responsibilities of the task force are to: 1.) Identify all the agencies/entities involved in various aspects of code enforcement and neighborhood cleanup; 2.) Define the activities and scope of the agencies or organizations; and 3.) Identify overlapping and redundant activities and develop opportunities for collaboration, coordination and leveraging of these agencies and organizations resources.

District Attorney General Bill Gibbons and Robert Lipscomb, executive director Memphis Housing Authority and director Housing and Community Development chair the Code Enforcement Task Force.

“Shelby County is unique in that it has an environmental community court in which city and county code violations can be prosecuted. This directly addresses the “broken windows” theory of crime. When there are literal broken windows in a community it creates an atmosphere that is conducive to crime. Through this Task Force, city, county and state agencies can work together to target specific properties and fix the “broken windows” in Memphis and Shelby County,” said Gibbons.

One of the first Task Force initiatives kicks off Saturday, October 30, 2004 in Hickory Hills. The Community Improvement Project is a four-part pilot project. The goal of the Community Improvement Project is to empower citizens to encourage their neighbors to clean up their properties before code enforcement or law enforcement becomes involved. In phase one, community volunteers will distribute flyers to all houses in a specific area (in this case, two specific neighborhoods in Hickory Hill) outlining the top ten most common housing code violations. Two weeks later, in phase two, the volunteers will inspect their neighborhoods, looking for possible code violations. In phase three, letters from the District Attorney will be sent to those homeowners believed to be in violation. In phase four, after a final volunteer inspection, the addresses of houses still in violation will be handed over to the appropriate code enforcement office.

“The realignment of the City’s Code Enforcement Department in Housing and Community Development and the decentralization of the Code Enforcement Department into seven offices with inspectors in the seven council districts will enhance customer service for the citizens of Memphis,” Lipscomb stated. “I am confident that the outcomes from this re-organization, combined with the involvement of the task force and the City committing more than \$4.2 million in federal funding to demolish and remove vacated buildings and structures will have a significant and positive impact on our community while providing substantial improvements to the physical environment of our neighborhoods,” he added.

The first meeting of the Code Enforcement Task Force will be held on November 4, 2004 at 9am in the Memphis Police Department central precinct on Tillman.

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**October 27, 2004**

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